



Montana No Kid Hungry Core Messages to Interim Committee on Children and Families March 20, 2012

- Governor Brian Schweitzer and Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services in partnership with Share Our Strength®, a national organization working to end childhood hunger, launched the Montana No Kid Hungry® initiative on February 21, 2012. The purpose is to connect Montana kids with nutritious meals where they live, learn and play.
- The initiative aims to end childhood hunger in Montana by using proven strategies to increase the number of kids who eat meals through federally-funded nutrition assistance programs such as the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program.
 - The Department of Public Health and Human Services oversees administration of all three of these programs.
 - DPHHS works to increase the economic security and self-sufficiency of Montana families and ensures the health and safety of Montanans by providing essential services and linkages to community resources.
 - The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), in partnership with Share Our Strength, is committed to developing a comprehensive plan to reduce childhood hunger in communities across Montana by: bringing more resources to the table, developing strategies to strengthen existing programs, and building on public-private partnerships to sustain this initiative.
 - Currently the work plan is being developed as well as a statewide capacity assessment to be conducted in coming months.
 - Information interviews and focus groups are being held on all seven Montana reservations to learn about the gaps and unique needs of our reservation communities.
- More than 48,000 children (21.8%) in Montana are at risk of hunger, according to Feeding Americaⁱ. That means that more than one in five children live in families that are struggling to put food on the table.
- Studies show that kids who are hungry can have trouble focusing and getting along with others, complain often of headaches, stomachaches and other ailments, and fall behind in school. Hunger decreases their ability to learn, grow, and play.
- A recent Share Our Strength® survey of teachers also showed that nearly two-thirds (65%) of K-8 teachers said there are children in their classrooms who regularly come to school hungry because they are not getting enough to eat at home.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Feeding America. "Map the Meal Gap: Child Food Insecurity 2011."

ⁱⁱ Share Our Strength. *Hunger In Our Schools: Share Our Strength's Teachers Report*. Is there a hyper link